

# TRINIDAD MUSEUM SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Spring 2025

400 Janis Court

P.O. Box 1126

Trinidad, CA 95570

trinidadmuseum.org

Contributors: Patti Fleschner, Alexandra Cox, Nora Thompson & Melissa Gantt

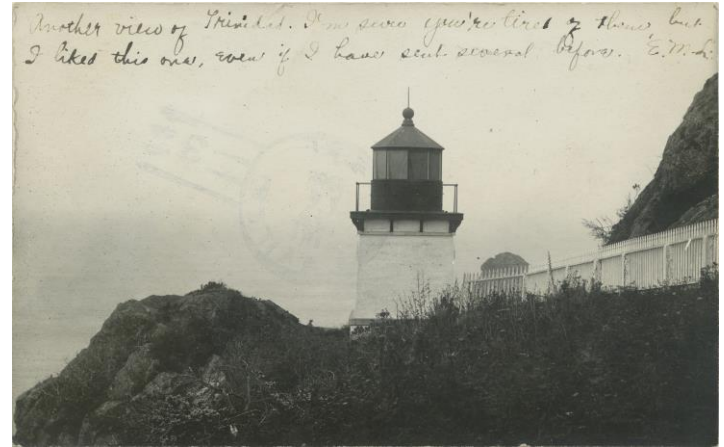
## THE HUMBOLDT PROJECT - POSTCARDS of TRINIDAD



"The Humboldt Project-Postcards of Trinidad" exhibit features Trinidad images from the vast Steve Lazar collection of over 10,000 postcards. Some of the photographers featured in the exhibit are Jesse A. Meiser, A.W. Ericson, Frank Patterson, Casper H. Laws, Alexander "Zan" Stark, Swanland Photo Lab, Art-Ray Co and the Eastman Co.

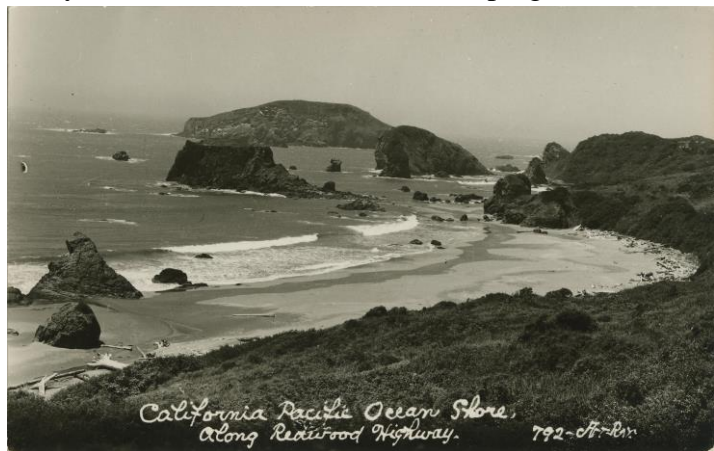
The splendid large black and white image anchoring the exhibit is from a glass negative by Jesse A. Meiser, circa 1904-1910. It shows some faint remnants of the old railroad trestle which extended to the Ryder-Nordheimer 1859 wharf attached to Trinidad Head, the white lighthouse barn on Trinidad Head, the Tsurai Village houses above Old Home Beach, and at the top of the bluff (at the intersection of today's Trinity & Edwards Streets), the Underwood Store and Pink's Saloon. The two sepia-toned glass negative plates on either side of the large photograph show Little Trinidad Head and Old Home Beach in the early 1900s. There are some rare postcards showing Trinidad scenes during the May 1908 Great White Fleet gathering including the names and images of all 16 battle ships. Beaches, restaurants, lodging, the harbor and pier, the 1871 lighthouse and the Memorial Lighthouse, the Crannell lumber town, the whaling station, the Redwood Highway all are featured. Over 300 Trinidad postcard images are shown on the slide show loop in the Photography Room.

Curators of the exhibit are Steve Lazar, Cal-Poly Interns Nora Thompson and Melissa Gantt, Alexandra Cox and Patti Fleschner



"The Humboldt Project is the alter-ego of Steve Lazar, a degenerate deltiologist with highly provincial taste. Deltiology is the study and collecting of postcards. At its heart The Humboldt Project is a conceptual art piece. The concept: what would happen if you began collecting and compiling postcards of Humboldt County? What would you discover? How would it affect you? How would it affect others? What began as a curiosity quickly turned from hobby to habit and the collection now stands at 10,000+ cards, acquired one by one over the last 15 years, primarily via eBay. Week by week, the collection continues to grow. I've a working theory that within a year of residency, most newcomers are infected with a deep and abiding interest in this great place we call Humboldt. Not long after I started collecting local postcards, I began showing them off to others. Whether to colleagues, co-workers, strangers, or friends, I quickly discovered that these local historical images drew real interest and fascination, and I felt increasingly obliged to make them more accessible. Around this time, I began scanning cards in an effort to build a public online archive through the [thehumboldtproject.org](http://thehumboldtproject.org) website. I also began making high quality prints from scans of cards in the collection and handing them out around Humboldt to people I meet. After sharing thousands of cards with people in person and online, it's become clear that there is a real thirst for history and geography amongst all Humboldters, past and present. Through a partnership

with the Cal Poly Cultural Resources Facility begun in 2023, students developed a postcard database which allowed relaunch of the next generation of the website late last year. Cal Poly Special Collections librarian Carly Marino was instrumental in helping realize our



vision for the site, which will soon feature over 2000 postcards from the collection, powerful new search functionality, and the ability to filter and sort by photographer, publisher, location, date, or subject. At this point nearly 5000 cards in the collection have been digitized and work developing metadata for the next wave of images is underway with students from the CRF. Since October 2022, THP has maintained an instagram account where we post scans of sent cards from the collection, on the anniversary of their postmarks. We've over 650 posts to date covering nearly every day of the Calendar year. On off days we enjoy sharing videos of cards from the collection filmed out in the wild amidst their modern counterparts. We call this practice repeat phone-photography." ~ Steve Lazar



## Luffenholtz Fish Camp 1950

Barbara and Chuck Snell spent their honeymoon camping at Luffenholtz Beach in 1950. There they met Yurok people very busy with fishing and drying smelt. Mamie Parton, Minnie Shafer and Alice Spott became lifelong friends. Barbara wrote "... brings back to me wonderful memories of my 'honeymoon' days and nights at Luffenholtz Beach... surf fishing, collecting sea weed, Porphria, making and drying the patties on the big rock and interacting with Mamie, Alice and Minnie, and, other members of their family...75 years ago. Good Grief!" Barbara and her late husband, Chuck, donated the splendid black and white photographs of their summer at Luffenholtz to the museum for the new exhibit in the Native American room.

### Fish Camp at Luffenholtz as Remembered by Axel Lindgren Jr.

"The cold wintry whistling winds of March is forever a welcome warning that spring is just around the corner and summer will follow. Mussels, Rock Fish, Cockles, Chitons, Abalones, Herring, Razor Clams, Crabs, Barnacles, Eels, Night Fish, Surf Fish, Spring Salmon and the new growth of various plants and herbs and a lot of hard work was synonymous with the approaching season.



The low tides combined with the calm ocean, because of the protection provided by Trinidad Head, made it possible for the Tsurai residents to safely harvest the various seafoods which were abundant in the low tide pools...At the beginning of summer, the supply of dried seaweed is stored for winter and preparations are being readied for the surf fish drying task at Luffenholtz Beach.

The two choice campsites on Luffenholtz Beach belonged to the daughters of Mary Warren. These camps were near the fish, plenty of water for washing the fish, and also, quality water for drinking, plenty of firewood and most importantly, plenty of drying space. The big rock at the mouth of the creek was Annie Kirby's, a medicine Woman in her own right, who died in 1929. Her camp was last used by her daughter-in-law Minnie Shafer and her sister, Alice Spott, in 1951 or 1952. Eliza Lindgren, who died in



1940, used her camp for the last time in 1938. The other camps were on the sandy part of the beach, and grass mats were used to dry the fish on. Their firewood and drinking water were carried to their camps. Sometimes during the hot days, shade trees of alder were temporarily erected and resembled a baseball backstop. Nearest camp to my grandma's place was the James family. George James was the son of Humpback Jim. Next to James' was Trinidad Pete and his wife, Emma, who was my grandmother's (Eliza Lindgren) first cousin, and also the sister of Blind Liz. Right under the Linton's house (1532 Scenic Drive) was Sandy Child's camp. Sandy was the grandson of 'Old Willie.' The next camp was Trinidad Jack and Kitty Jack and way up the beach was Bill Stevens' (we called him Oregon Bill; I don't know why) camp. Sometimes Lottie Charles of Big Lagoon would share the camp of the James family. The camps on the beach didn't dry too many fish, only for their own use.

After two or three good runs of the fish, the logs, rocks and grass mats glistened with fish which had to be turned daily and sometimes twice on a hot day. The old women made their job appear easy and enjoyable while keeping an eye on the youngsters who were trying to enjoy the beach. There were too many rules and customs to obey: you couldn't dam the creek, couldn't throw handful of sand on the water that resembled rain, could not swim in the ocean; like I said, 'too many rules to obey.'

When we became hungry, grandma would stir the campfire to a blaze and take half-dried fish, place them between two sticks that were bound together with a reed like grass, and stand the sticks with the fish near

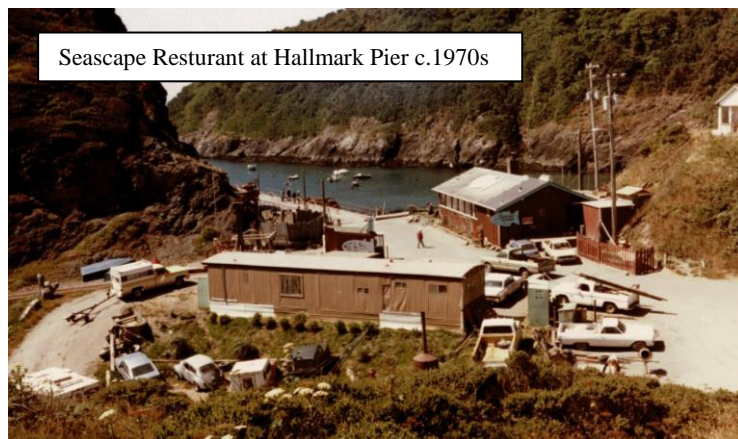
the fire and allow them to roast. Meanwhile flour, water and a little pinch of baking soda was kneaded into a inch-thick patty which was about six to eight inches in diameter and covered with hot sand, put the coffee pot on for herself, and within half an hour, the fish were cooked, the coffee boiled, the bread cooked nice-n-brown, the sand removed by a couple of smart taps on each side, break the bread into the exact number of pieces and put homemade butter and wild blackberry jelly on the hot steaming pieces. You know grandma did this for years, but she never did learn how to cook enough.

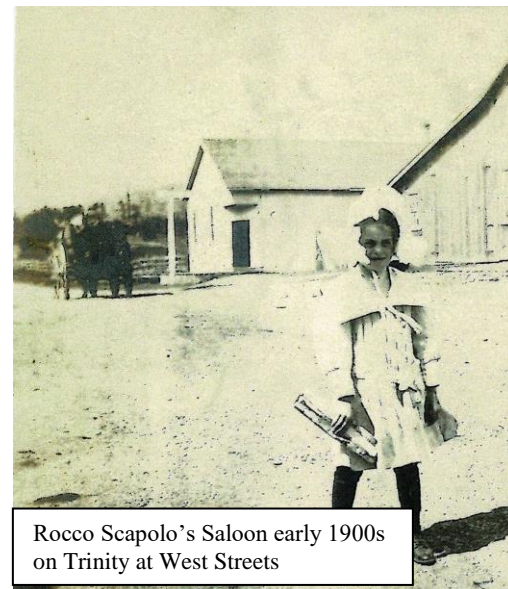
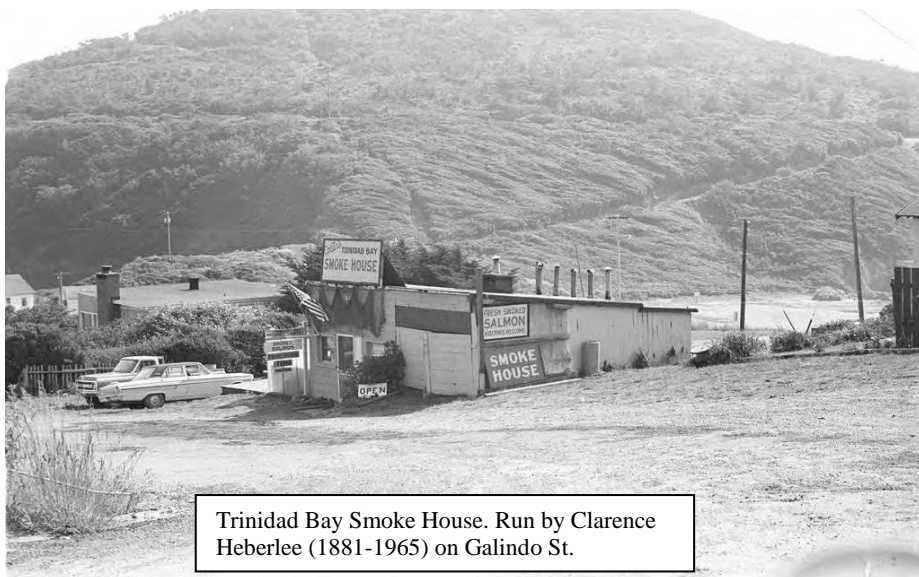
In September when the season is drawing to an end, Grandma would have four or five hundred pounds of dried surf which she would generously share with people who came to visit, or if she would go to visit, always she carried seaweed or dried fish. Many seasons passed by, but the one that stands out in my memory is the year grandma had seven full sacks and two half sacks of fried fish ready to be transported home. That night my Dad (Axel Lindgren Sr.) was extra tired, we decided to wait until the following evening. Early the next morning Grandma and I walked to Luffenholtz. On arrival she saw that seven sacks had been stolen; grandma said a lot of bad things loud and clear in every direction so that the world would know she was robbed. It was a long winter; in those days there were no food stamps, no federal grants, no welfare checks--just one sack of dried fish."

*Axel Lindgren Jr. (1918-1999) written in 1981 for "Trinidad News & Views" and the Trinidad Museum Society Newsletter. Photographs in this exhibit are from Barbara & Chuck Snell Collection and Special Collection Cal Poly Humboldt. Baskets and objects are from the Trinidad Museum Society Collections*

## Trinidad Eats & Drinks

The Heritage Room features an exhibit of photographs, menus, newspaper articles and memorabilia from vintage restaurants, smokehouses, saloons, grocery stores and hamburger stands.





## The Spanish Navy Sails into Trinidad Bay 250 Years Ago on June 9, 1775



King Carlos III Coin c.1787  
Gift of Richard Heller

The first contact between Europeans and the Yurok people of Tsurai Village occurred on June 9, 1775 when the 77' at keel Spanish frigate *Santiago* and the 36' schooner *Sonora* sailed into the harbor. Several canoes with villagers rowed out to greet, and trade, with the Spanish mariners commanded by Bruno de Hezeta y Dudagoitia and Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra. On June 11, 1775, Trinity Sunday, a cross was raised on Trinidad Head, a solemn mass was given by Father Campa, and Trinidad was claimed for King Carlos III of Spain. The port was given the name, "La Santisima Trinidad."

The voyage of discovery, which commenced in March from Spanish naval headquarters San Blas, New Spain, under the instructions of Viceroy Bucareli, was to find safe ports, seek the Northwest Passage, look for any Russian or other European encroachments along what was considered Spanish territory along the unknown Pacific Northwest coast, and to evaluate the natural resources of potential settlements up to 65 degrees' latitude. Bucareli's instructions were that Indian inhabitants were to be treated "affectionately

with no force used against them except when necessary for self-defense." During the ten days in Trinidad, the Tsurai villagers were generous in supplying the ships with wood and water from the abundant, pristine springs. The Indians were given presents by the Spanish. They did not relish the Spanish bread (pretending to eat it but throwing it away when no one was looking) nor the Spanish cloth. The Yurok were very interested in iron implements.

The Spanish drew the first maps of any accuracy of the coast. No charts were available to the navigators other than a dismally inaccurate one by a Frenchman, Bellin, who drew a representation of the 1741 Bering-Chirikov Russian expedition in the north. Pilot Francisco Mourelle and Bodega y Quadra drew the Trinidad Bay map showing the Little River (Rio de las Tortolas or River of the Turtle Doves) and other marine and coastal features.

Bodega y Quadra described the villagers: "...the natives are affable and not suspicious and are honest, except when some article catches their attention as being new and useful...The native houses are square,

subterranean huts, well-constructed of thick planks, with roofs which touch the ground and circular entrances barely the width of a human body. The floor is very flat and clean and in the middle there is a square hole, one vara (33 inches) deep for making and keeping a fire, which heats the entire inside of the house. Lastly, the construction of the houses is sturdy enough to protect the inhabitants from predatory animals."

He described the flora: "The land asks only to be cultivated to produce in abundance the same fruits, more or less, as the countries of Europe. Its mountains are covered with tall pines which form a thick forest centuries old; its residue continually improves the soil, which supports fragrant green growth. It enchants the senses, for the mixture of rose, wild marjoram, lily, plaintain, celery, thistle, camomile, and an infinite number of other plants that would be precious finds for a botanist are produced with that inconsistent disorder with which Nature knows how to divert the eyes of the observer and forms the most pleasing and agreeable garden imaginable....Without any great exploration, since neither the shortness of the time nor the need for security permitted us to go very far from the beaches, we found strawberries, mulberries...blackberries, sweet onions, and mushrooms, which we ate with pleasure in that happy paradise. These fruits were found most abundantly near the streams, which are frequent and crystal clear...the pines are of extraordinary height; among those which we found fallen on the beaches and lacking their upper ends were some which measured sixty varas in length and two in diameter at the bottom...This wood is good for decking, beams, and masts."

Hezeta wrote in his journal about the suitability of Trinidad for settlement: "The establishment of a port at Trinidad, besides seeming to be to be advantageous to the extension of the gospel (the first objective of our sovereign), is a virtual necessity not only to secure the convenience it offers to ships of medium size, but also because it would be difficult to dislodge any foreigner who might take possession of it. Its location is inviting to such foreigners for the establishment of a colony, who could then easily deposit their trade goods in the interior of New Mexico, a circumstance that would devolve into well-known detriment to the royal treasury...If a garrison of no more than sixty men were left at the port, there is sufficient land for sown crops and raising livestock so that without any other assistance they would be able to live comfortably without leaving the limits of the fortification, where the

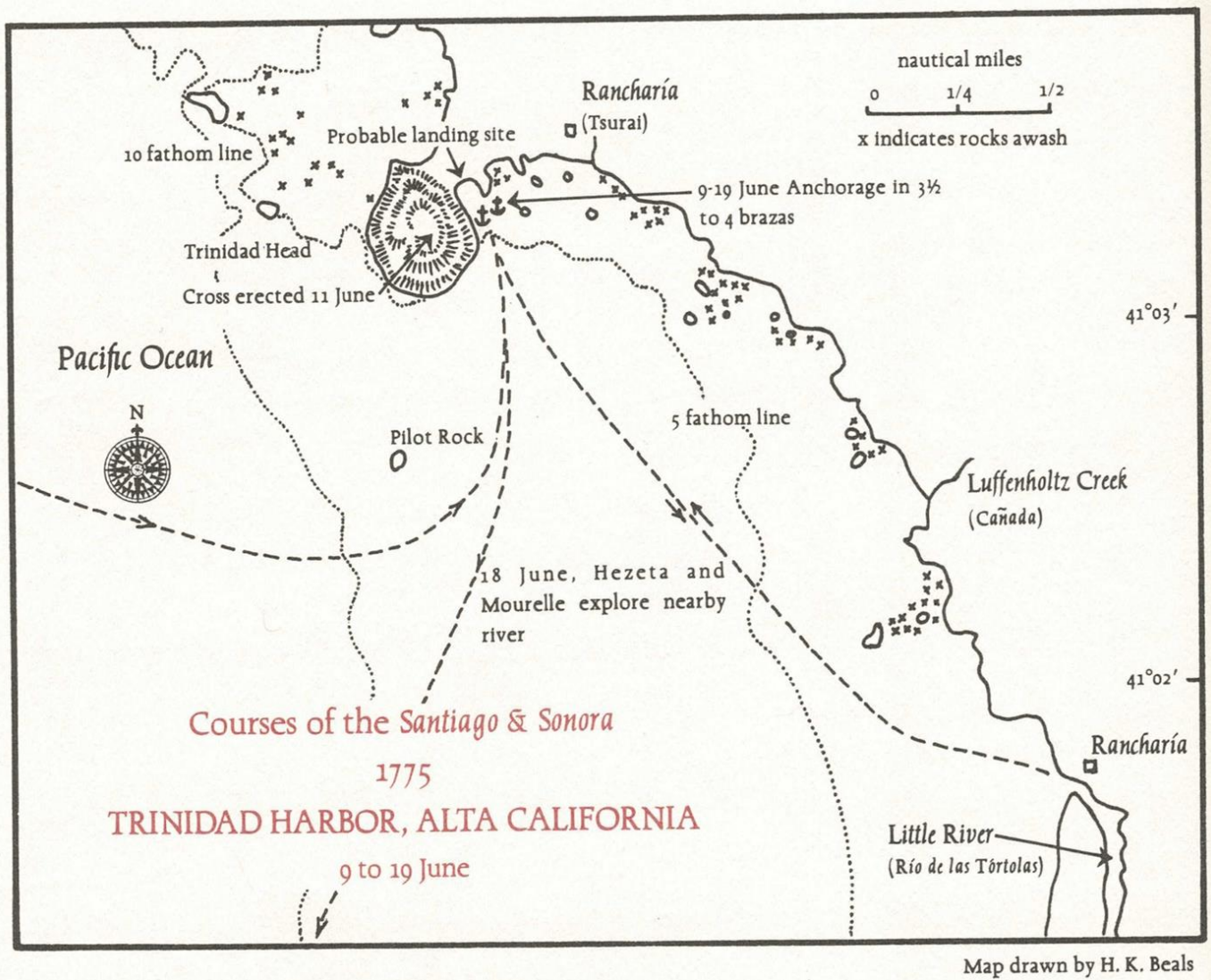
quality of the black soil appears to be favorable for farming."

Don Francisco Antonio Mourelle wrote in his journal, referring to the Yurok people, "...we never noted any actions on their part suggesting anything but the most loyal friendship and the fullest confidence in our men, by whom, in turn, they were treated with kindness and sociability. Father Miguel de la Campa, Chaplain of the *Santiago*, wrote on June 18, 1775, as the Spanish prepared to leave the port: "When we went to say good-bye to the Indians, they showed by the expression of their faces the sorrow they felt at our departure, and by signs they told us that they would mourn five days. Without our telling them anything about the cross, they said on their own account that they would not take it down and that they would take care that no one else took it down, and that whenever we returned we would find it there."

After ten days, the Spanish sailed away on their voyage north, encountering storms, illness among the men (scurvy) and a terrible altercation near today's Quinalt in Washington. On August 11, Hezeta, on the *Santiago* had to turn back not too far from today's Vancouver Island because his men were so weak from scurvy. Hezeta spotted the Columbia River in the distance but his men were too ill to explore it and they sailed back to Monterey, arriving on August 29, 1775. Bodega y Quadra and Mourelle, however, combined from the two ships the few fit men (there were sixteen on the *Sonora*) and continued their exploratory voyage north and made it to 58 degrees' latitude before the crew, miserable from cold, wet and scurvy, could not go on. When they arrived back in Monterey on October 8, 1775 having discovered Bodega Bay as they sailed south, the sailors, including Bodega y Quadra and Mourelle, were so ill they had to be carried off the schooner.

The Spanish did not return to Trinidad to settle. The 21 Spanish Missions would stop at Sonoma (1823). Coastal exploration continued through 1794, and a thorough mapping of the entire Pacific Northwest, from today's Mexico, California, Oregon, Washington, British Columbia and Alaska was completed by 1792, largely through the efforts of Bodega y Quadra and others in other voyages. However, the expense of the voyages, the death of Carlos III in 1788 and waning of interest by his successor, Charles IV, the American Revolution and the French Revolution all influenced the need for the Spanish navy elsewhere in the world.





Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra  
Born 1744 in Lima, Peru  
Died 1794 in New Spain (Mexico)

## Creative Cal Poly Humboldt Interns, Melissa & Nora



Cal Poly Humboldt Intern, **Nora Thompson** (right), led the co-curation of the *Humboldt Project: Postcards of Trinidad* exhibition. Her work has included transporting prints, curating layout, and assisting with installation. She's especially drawn to the exhibition's blend of history and art, where vintage postcards—through photography, text, and personal messages—serve as intimate time capsules. “The combination of imagery and handwritten notes is like a portal,” she says. “You get to see history firsthand, told through the voices of people who lived it.” Born and raised in San Francisco, Nora is graduating this spring with a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a Certificate in Museum and Gallery Practices. She hopes to continue working in curation and exhibition design within museum and gallery settings. Her personal art practice includes painting, photography, and drawing, and her work will be featured in the upcoming Art Graduates Exhibition at the Reese Bullen Gallery this May. Nora is incredibly grateful for the opportunity to have worked alongside Steve, Pattie, Alex, and Melissa on this project, and is excited to see where her path in the field of curation will take her next.

To explore more of Nora's work, visit her portfolio on Instagram:

@handle\_.with\_.care



**Melissa Gantt** (left) is a graduating senior at Cal Poly Humboldt majoring in Art History and Museum Studies. Adopted from China, Melissa was raised by two Naval officers which meant that she moved from place to place every 2-4 years. Living in Escondido, Guam, Virginia Beach and many more in between, her mother eventually retired and the family finally settled down in the Coachella Valley before Melissa packed up her bags once more to make the big move to Arcata.

She is working towards receiving a certificate of study for Museum and Gallery Practices which has allowed her the wonderful opportunity to intern at the Trinidad Museum for the Spring 2025 semester. In her spare time, she enjoys taking hikes through various forest and coastal trails in Arcata. On the not so sunny days, Melissa enjoys working on a variety of mixed media art pieces such as knitting/crochet/painting/embroidery/sewing/etc. After graduating, she plans on finishing her International Business degree in hopes of finding a career position in Museum/Gallery operations management.



Native Plant Garden Poppies and Wild Strawberries





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400 Janis Court  
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Trinidad, California 95570  
trinidadmuseum.org



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#### Memberships

- ☐ \$35 Member      ☐ \$50 Sponsor      ☐ \$100 Patron      ☐ \$250 Benefactor  
☐ \$1,000 Lifetime membership

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- Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Native Plant Garden      ☐ Exhibits      ☐ **ROOF REPLACEMENT!**  
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